

## FLOWERS FROM THE TOMB OF JESUS

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Our Lord was crucified in the season of early flowers. During the month Nisan (or April) the winter rains made vegetation leap forth into wondrous beauty. The gardens were brilliant with the crocus and the hyacinth, and the plains of Sharon were snowy with the white narcissus. Jesus was buried in a rich man's garden, and no one can tell how many flowers and odorous vines had been planted by the gardener around Joseph's family tomb. The spices within and the plants without may have made the spot in which our dear Master slumbered exceeding fragrant.

That hallowed tomb was itself buried up centuries ago, and the very spot cannot be identified. But there are certain flowers of grace which will bloom upon the grave of Jesus to the end of time. Faith grows there in beautiful profusion. A sad company of ignorant doubters were those disciples in regard to their Master's resurrection; even when the three women came back from the sepulchre and pronounced it empty, and that they had seen the Saviour alive, some of the Apostles treated it as an "idle tale and believed it not." Thomas stood out until an actual sight of his Lord silenced his unbelief. From that day faith in Christ's victory over death has been a cardinal feature in every Christian's creed. With it is linked that other faith that if Jesus rose again, so would every one who "sleeps in Jesus" rise also from the dust. This perennial flower of faith, which blooms like certain roses in all seasons, has been set out on innumerable graves all over our death-cursed world. It grows on the little mound that covers my dear boy; I seem to see it all over among the hills of Greenwood.

Hope is another fragrant flower that springs from the burial sod. On one leaf of the plant we read, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." On another leaf is inscribed, "Sorrow not as others that have no hope; for if Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." The expectation of every pastor, that he shall yet "break ground" and ascend with his flock, cheers his soul when he stands beside the grave in which his faithful ones are being laid, dust to dust. This hope is an anchor that has held many a poor heart-broken mother who has moistened her darling's resting place with her tears. To her Jesus draws nigh and says: "Weep not; this child shall rise again." And so she tills that little sacred soil until it is covered over with the blossoms of hope as thick as white lilies of the valley. The original seeds of this fair flower came from Christ's tomb in the garden. It grows best when it is watered by prayer. That is a desolate grave indeed over which there does not creep out a single sprig or blade of Hope!

Are these all the flowers which thrive in the hallowed mound in which Christ's successors lie? No! There is one modest lily called Resignation. Jesus Himself declared that it was better that He should have died, for He said that He "ought to have suffered and to enter into His glory." His road to glory lay through the tomb, and so must ours. Never did our Lord set this world above the better world. He only brought three persons back to life (that we read of), and then only for a high and especial purpose to be gained. There is a legend that the first thing Lazarus said

after his resurrection was, "Shall I have to die again?" On being told that he must, it is said that he never smiled afterward. Truly, if some of the crowned ones in Paradise were driven back to this sin-stained earth, they might well wear mourning for their own bereavement. To die is gain! That is the sweet word which I detect in every bud and leaf on the plant of Resignation. God hath better things in store for us; His will, not ours, be done.

It may seem a strange place to set out the flower of Thankfulness; but that, too, grows and emits its sweetness from Christ's sepulchre and those of His followers. Paul, standing by that grave over which Jesus had triumphed, shouts aloud, "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord." His triumph over death is our triumph. Because He rose and lives again, we shall live also.

Not only on Easter Sabbaths are these flowers to be found on our Lord's emptied sepulchre, but every day, in every clime, wherever death hollows a grave, these precious plants of grace may be made to bloom, and to scatter their delicious perfumes. Perhaps some sorrowing child of God may read these lines and inquire, "Where shall I go to find faith and hope, and resignation for yonder freshly piled mound over my dead?" We answer, Go to the tomb where Jesus vanquished death—in the garden.

## "MY CONVERSION"

By Dr. Zacarias P. Carles

My father was a Professor in Barcelona, Spain. He was the youngest of a family of twenty-four children. One day he read the Bible, and after that he was no longer a good Roman Catholic. On account of that, he was put in prison and condemned to be shot, but before he was supposed to be executed, he was released from prison and sent home, where he died—poisoned by a Roman Catholic priest, his own cousin.

My mother had had twelve children then. Being a widow, and she herself not a very good Roman Catholic, because she had also read the Word of God, the situation was very hard for her. So, one day she approached me, and said, "Little son, you will have to go to work". I was then about seven years, six months old, and, forced by the circumstances, I had to go to a factory to work from half-past five in the morning until eight o'clock at night. In the season of work, some days we had to stay in the factory even until twelve o'clock at night. Of course, on Sundays we had to work. On Sunday evenings my boss came to pay my salary. After I had worked more than one hundred hours a week, like a real slave, my wages were about nine cents for the week.

On account of the many hours that I was away from home, and the many bad companions that I had in those days, my life was lost—lost in many ways. When I was about thirteen years old, my friends had appointed me captain of the gang. As a result of my sinful life, I became very sick, and the Doctor told my mother that I would die. My mother, of course, was very disappointed. One day a colporteur of the Bible Society came to my home, and my mother told him the story of my life—not very nice indeed. Among the things that she told the colporteur was that I was dying. Then that man of God told my mother, "Lady, I bring a remedy for your

son". "Are you a Doctor?" my mother asked him, and he replied, "More than a Doctor. I am a servant of the living God, and the medicine that I bring for your son is this Book—the New Testament. If your son reads it and believes its message, he will have spiritual life, and also good health".

My good mother brought the Book to my bed. I was sleeping then. When I awoke, I found it. I was very happy indeed to have a book in my hands; for we had no books. In fact, I did not need them, because I almost could not read. In those days, there were over seventy per cent in Spain who were unable to write or read. The Roman Church, who had been controlling the education in Spain from time immemorial, had always said, "Make people donkeys, and we will ride on their backs". Unfortunately, they had succeeded in Spain.

So, although I was very happy with my Book—the New Testament—I could not read very well. But, as I was in bed for many days, I went from one page to another, until I reached Saint Luke's Gospel. There I found my name, Zacarias (Zachariah). I was so happy to see that somebody else had had my own name, and because of that, I wanted to know his history. Little by little I read the first chapters of Luke, and little by little I discovered more than my own name. I found the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

For the first time in my life, I realized my sinful condition and that I was condemned to go to hell. Then I wanted to pray, but to whom? Through whom? We had been taught in the Roman Churches that we should pray through saints, Virgins, and Mothers of God, because of all these idols we had an infinite number. I wanted to know if God was able to hear my prayers without the intervention of all these idols. I went back to my Saint Luke's Gospel to find the answer to my urgent problem, and I read there in the first chapter of Luke, verse 13, my own name, like this: "Fear not, Zacarias, for thy prayer is heard". I claimed this verse for myself, and since then, I have realized that to pray I do not need idols of any kind, but that I should pray through the Lord Jesus Christ, Who, from that moment I accepted as my own personal Saviour. Since then, the idols are gone for me, and I have consecrated my life for the service of my Lord, in order that many others might know the Way of Salvation, so simple, but so effective, as I had found through the pages of the inspired Word of God.

Several years have passed by since then. My effort in different parts of the world has always been to bring His Gospel to the multitudes who live without Christ and without salvation.

This is why, relinquishing my position as a Professor in the University, I have organized the SPANISH CHRISTIAN MISSION, in order that some of my 28,000,000 people in Spain, lost in darkness, far away from my Saviour may have some opportunity to know the Lord Jesus as their personal Saviour, as I had when I accepted Him many years ago through reading the Word of God.

DR. ZACARIAS P. CARLES.

Daily meditate on your union with the ascended Lord; reckon that in Him you have died to sin; and present your tempted members as instruments of righteousness unto Christ, and yours will be a course of unbroken victory.—Meyers.